



# ANNISTON PARKLET HANDBOOK





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Downtown Anniston Bike Race

## INTRODUCTION

This handbook tells you everything you need to know about designing, permitting, and building a parklet in Anniston, Alabama. It will help you figure out what's required to make your parklet dreams a reality. Whether you're a business owner or a member of a community group, a designer or a contractor, you'll find information about permitting and review processes, siting and design guidelines, and parklet host responsibilities in the following chapters.

### WHAT IS A PARKLET?

Parklets are small urban parks, created from on-street parking spaces. Parklet programs have been created in cities around the world as a way to allow private business owners to develop and maintain active open spaces that are accessible to the public. Parklets are created by converting a few on-street parking spaces into public areas for dining, seating, gathering, and other

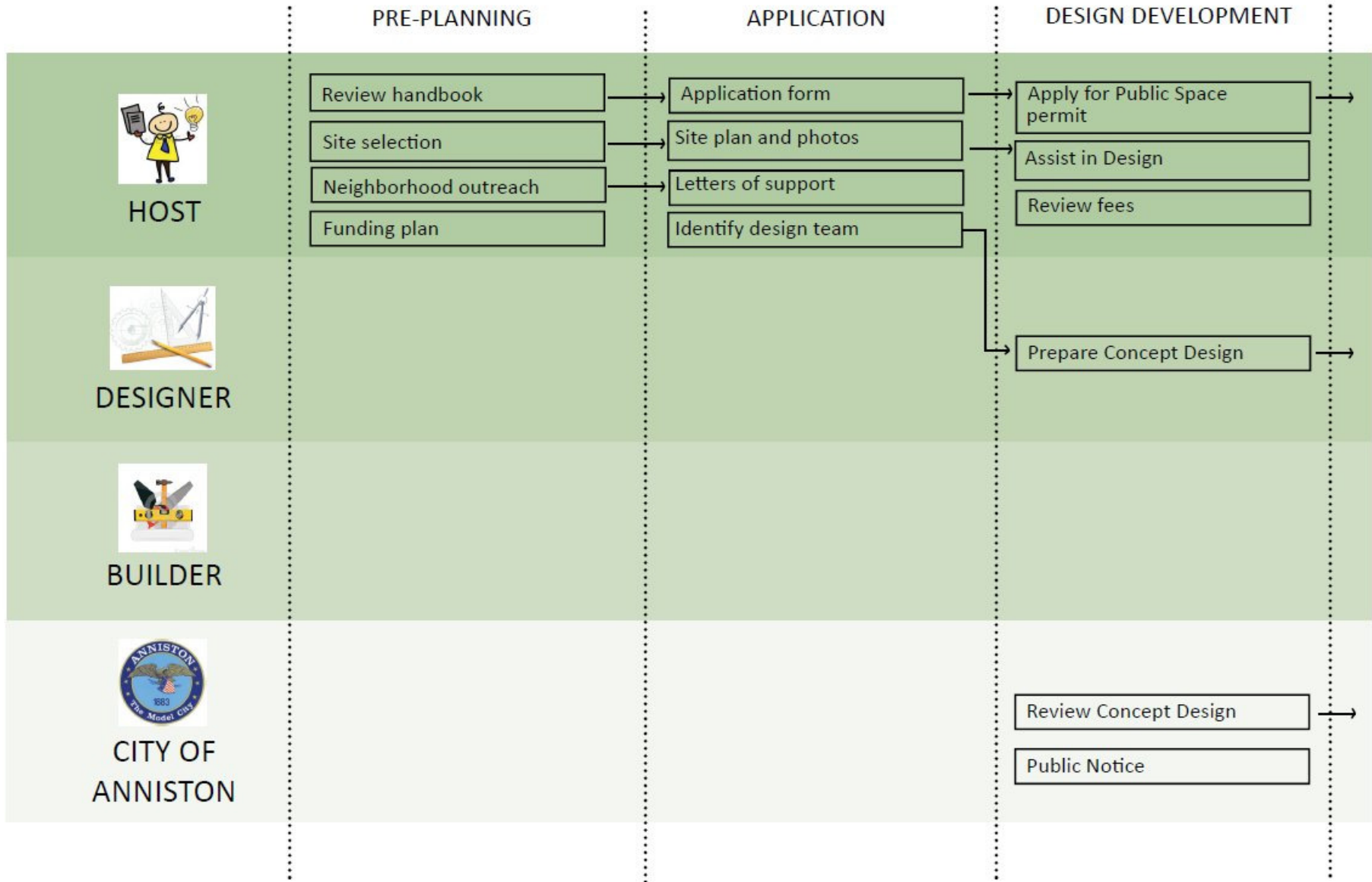


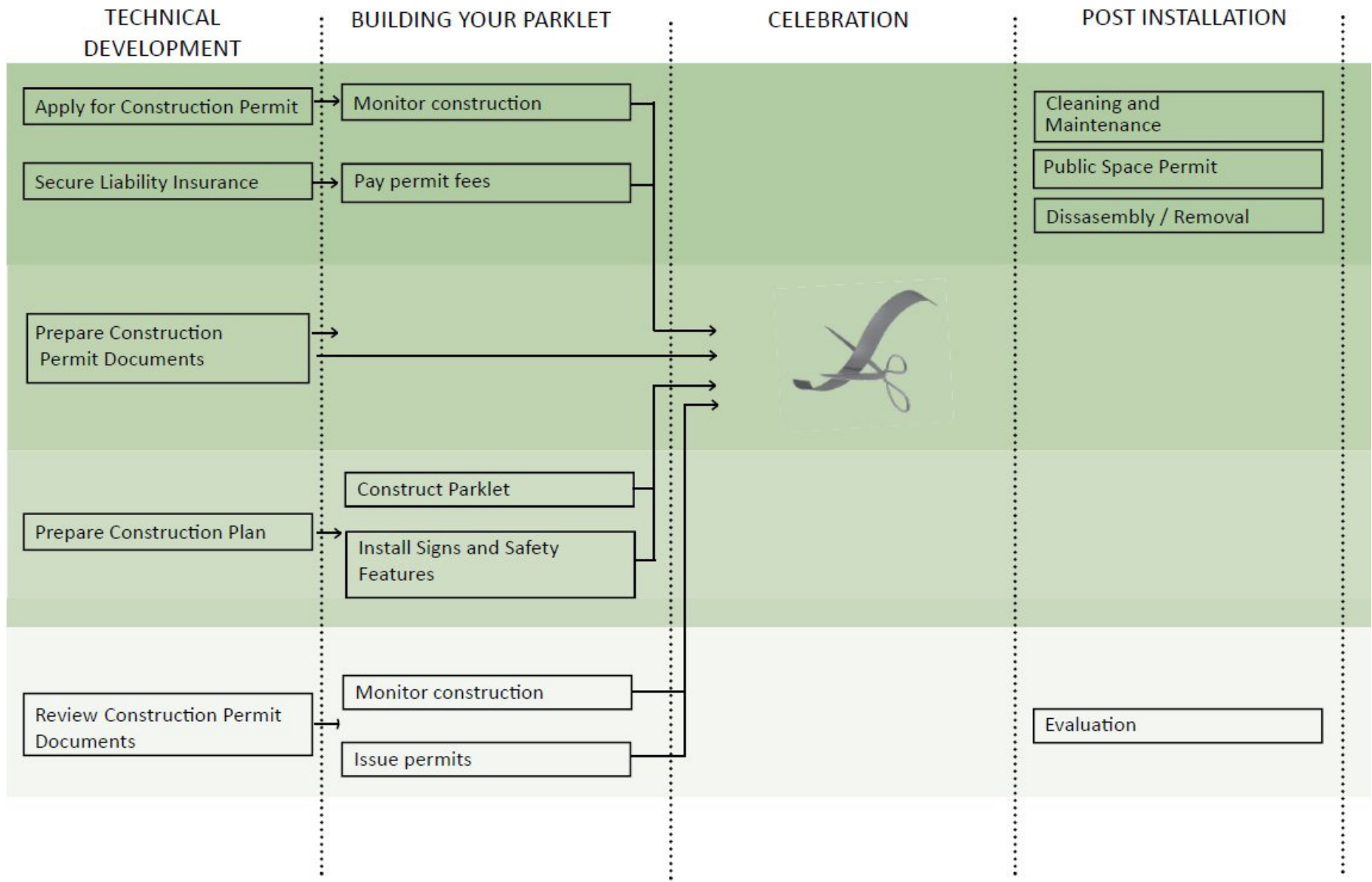
active uses. Parklets can increase foot traffic and add seating space near local businesses, while still maintaining plenty of on-street parking. They are a cost effective way to activate streets, create more vibrant neighborhoods, and promote economic vitality. They encourage walking and biking and create more attractive and inviting commercial districts.

Parklets are not considered permanent. They are approved under the City of

Anniston's Public Space Permit under the City's plan review and permitting process. The Public Space Permit can be renewed from year to year if the parklet serves the community well. Anniston business owners are enthusiastic about adding public space to their blocks and the City of Anniston would like to encourage private investment that will make Downtown a vibrant area.

# PARKLET PROCESS





## PRE-PLANNING

### DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

There are some things to take into consideration when planning a parklet. Most streets in downtown Anniston are well suited for parklets; however, some areas may present some challenges. Some of the things you will want to take into consideration are steep hills, pedestrian crossing areas, utility manholes/vaults, fire hydrants, or parking spaces that are designated as accessible parking (although, in certain areas, the City may be able to work with you to relocate these spaces). It is best to avoid busy highways, where fast moving traffic is in close proximity to on-street parking spaces and sidewalks. You will want to make sure that the drainage along the street or curb is not obstructed, and that the parklet is constructed at sidewalk grade or provides access to people of all abilities. Some of these things can be worked around, but may take additional engineering and investment. Other things such as public utilities or fire hydrants may not be able to be changed.

### COORDINATION WITH CITY PROJECTS

The City of Anniston has street and utility work planned which may require construction within the City right-of-way. If a City project is in the works for the street on which you want a parklet, you may have to remove the parklet during construction, or you may want to delay your construction. You should contact the City's Department of Planning and Development Services to find out if there is any proposed street work in the near future.

### PARKLET APPLICATION

The first formal step is to submit an application for your proposed parklet. The City of Anniston will review your application and notify you to let you know if your application is approved. The application includes an application form, a site plans, photos, and letters of support.

### Parklet Application Form

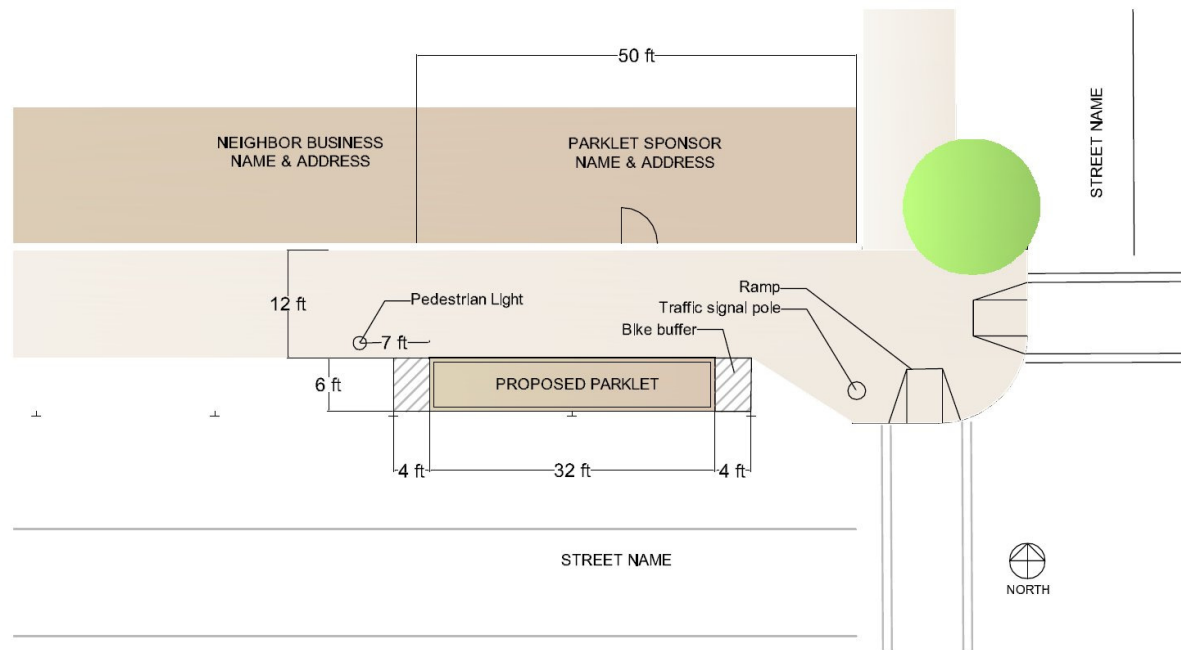
The parklet application form requests information related to the proposed location and purpose of your parklet. You will be required to list the address of your property, adjacent properties, and the number of parking spaces you are requesting for the proposed parklet. You will need to provide a written description (two paragraphs) regarding your intentions for the space.

### Site Plan

You will be required to submit a site plan of the proposed location, indicating how the parklet fits within the street. The site plan can be a hand sketch, and does not require professional surveys or drawings. It will need to show the area around the parklet, the proposed layout and dimensions of the parklet, and where parklet amenities (e.g., seating and landscape features) would be placed. Your site plan must include the following information:



- 1) Location of your property, business, or organization
- 2) Location of proposed parklet
- 3) Location of existing street fixtures (e.g., utility poles and vaults, bus shelters, sign posts, tree pits, crosswalks) and their distance from the nearest edge of the proposed parklet
- 4) Approximate dimensions of the proposed parklet
- 5) Approximate width of the adjacent sidewalk
- 6) Name and location of adjoining streets or alleys
- 7) North arrow



### Photos

The application should include at least three photos showing the proposed parking space(s) that would be converted into a parklet, along with the adjacent street and sidewalk. At a minimum, please provide one photo from across the street and one photo from each end of the proposed parklet.

### Letters of Support

Successful parklets are supported by their local communities. To demonstrate this support, you must submit at least three letters from businesses, residents, community groups, or property owners in the neighborhood. At least one letter must come from a business or resident

located on the same block as the proposed parklet. Additionally, you will need to provide us with a copy of a letter or email that shows you have contacted the Downtown Merchants Association to notify them of your desire to construct a parklet.

## APPPLIATION REVIEW

The City of Anniston will review applications and evaluate them based on their proposed location, the demonstrated level of community support, and the programming intentions for the space. The City of Anniston uses the following criteria to assess the applications and approve new parklet hosts:



**PARKLET LOCATION**—Is the parklet sited in a location that would successfully activate the public right-of-way?

**COMMUNITY BENEFIT**—Would the proposed parklet bring a positive community amenity to the city? Would it seem open and welcoming to all?

**PROGRAM AND DESIGN APPROACH**—Would the proposed program and design for the parklet create a valuable and attractive public space?

**PARKLET HOST**—Does the host demonstrate an understanding of the intent and function of parklets? Do they have a plan for managing and maintaining their parklet?

**COMMUNITY SUPPORT**—Are neighborhood businesses, residents, and/or community groups supportive of the proposal?

## DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

### ASSEMBLING A TEAM

Once you receive notification that your application has been accepted, you will want to assemble your design team. There are two roles that need to be filled- the designer and builder. The design team will take your initial idea and turn it into a concept design that meets the parklet standards, and the builder will be the one to bring your design to life.

1) DESIGNER: This person or team will

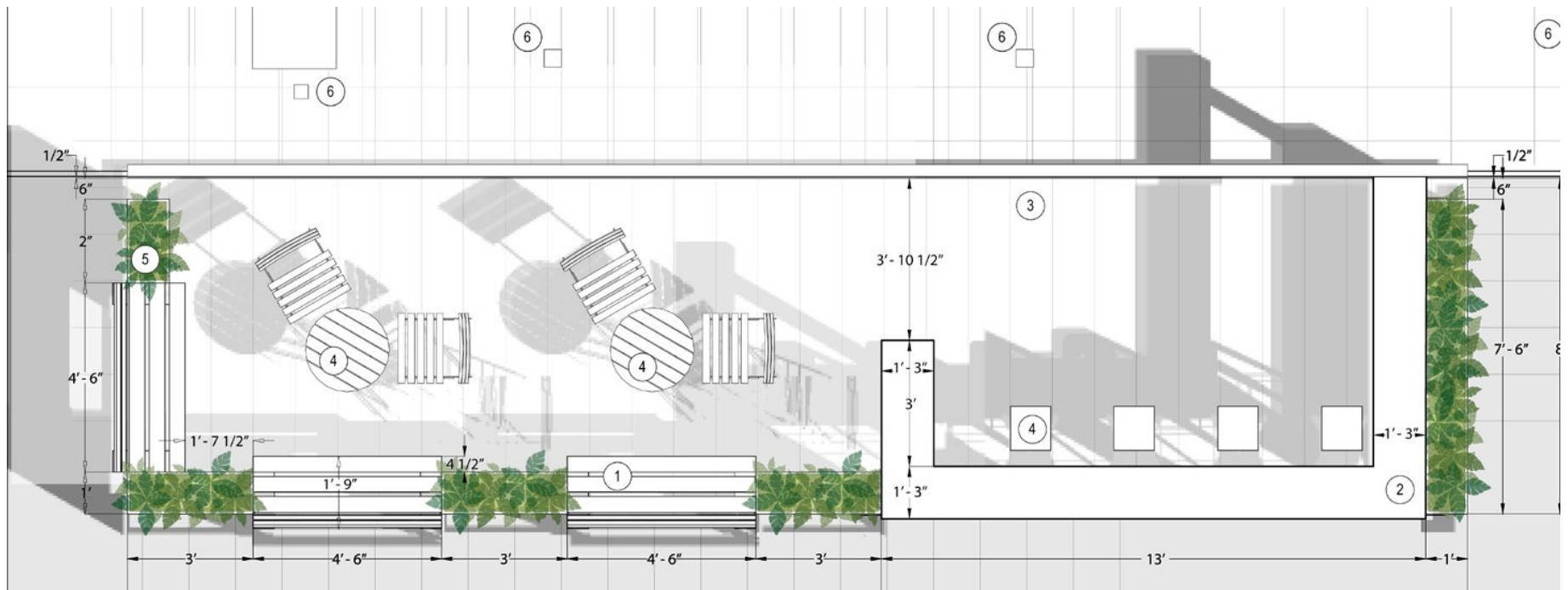
include a registered architect or landscape architect who can take the sketches and doodles you've made and turn them into concept design graphics. The designer will provide scaled plans, elevations, and graphics that ensure the proposed program and site amenities fit within the context. They will take into consideration the types of building materials and planting materials that will ensure a safe, comfortable and attractive space.

2) BUILDER: This person or team will determine the best means and methods of constructing the parklet. They should

be familiar with local building regulations, and be familiar with working in public rights of way where pedestrian and vehicular traffic must remain in operation.

### DRAFT CONCEPT DESIGN

The next step is to prepare and submit your draft concept design. Parklet concept designs are hand drawings or computer renderings of your parklet that show how the parklet will be built and how it will function. These graphics allow us to review how well your proposed parklet integrates with the

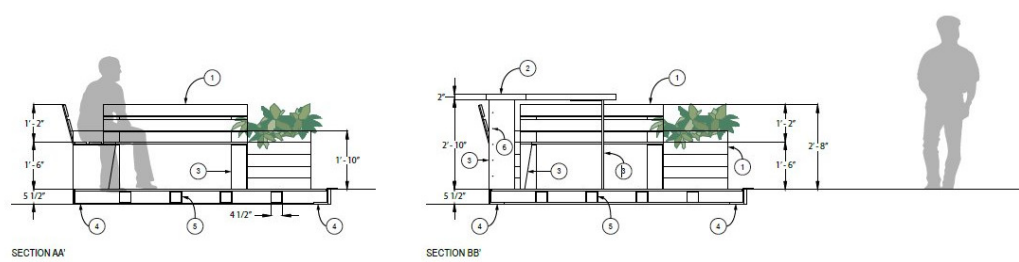


surrounding street and sidewalk features and determine if the design should be modified to improve the parklet's function, safety, or aesthetics.

Parklet concept designs must include a detailed, fully dimensioned plan, as well as a dimensioned section (side) view drawing, and at least two perspective sketches. At a minimum, you should prepare a perspective from the sidewalk next to the parklet and another from across the street. Be sure to follow the parklet design guidelines listed in this chapter when preparing your concept drawings. The concept drawings must show the following features:



- Dimensions of the parklet, including the width and length of the parklet and the height of all vertical elements
- Arrangement of all attached and removable furniture, amenities, and landscaping
- Basic materials used for the parklet surface, railing, and other attached elements (note that specific details about materials, such as the type of wood used for the surface or the diameter of fencing cable, do not need to be provided at this phase)



**SECTIONS**  
Scale at 1/2" = 1'-0"  
28 July 2014

- |                                 |                                             |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| 1 RECLAIMED WOOD BOARD          | 4 3/8" THICK 6X6" STEEL ANGLE               |
| 2 RECLAIMED WOOD TABLE TOP      | 5 1/4" THICK 4 1/2" STEEL TUBE @ 1'-7" O.C. |
| 3 BENT 3/8" STEEL FOR STRUCTURE | 6 STEEL CABLE                               |

- Parklet entrances, including Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) access points
- Proposed installations adjacent to the parklet (e.g., bike racks, wheel stops)

- Adjacent street elements (e.g., trees, tree pits, utility poles, signs), with distance from parklet
- Adjacent sidewalk, bike lane, vehicle travel lane, and buildings
- Setback dimensions from adjacent parking spaces

## CONCEPT DESIGN REVIEW

Once you have submitted your concept design, the City of Anniston will review the plans, elevations, and sketches to assess the parklet's safety, accessibility, aesthetics, basic materials, and overall function. The turnaround time for initial design comments is one week, but can be longer depending on the availability of staff time and the complexity of your site. When we provide feedback on your concept design, we'll ask you to revise your design and resubmit the drawings. Remember that design is an iterative process—it may take several rounds of review before we can consider your concept design “final.”

## PUBLIC SPACE PERMITTING

Once your concept design has been approved, you can apply for your Public Space Permit. This requires the following materials:

- Two 11”x17” printed copies of your concept design
- A \$250 review fee
- A signed and completed Public Space Permit form

These documents must be submitted to the City of Anniston's Department of Planning and Development Services

## PUBLIC NOTICE

After you've applied for your Public Space Permit, we will issue a public notice of your parklet application and hold a 14-day public comment period. Notices of your application will be posted at City Hall, mailed to businesses and residents within 200 feet of the proposed parklet site, and posted in a window adjacent to the site so that it is visible from the sidewalk. The notice forms include detailed information on the proposed parklet, comment period dates, and information about how the public can submit a comment. After the close of the public comment period, we will carefully review each of the comments we receive and then issue a decision to approve, modify, or deny the Public Space Permit application. We will post the decision on our website and send a note to everyone who commented on the application. The public then has 10 calendar days to request a review or reconsideration of the decision.

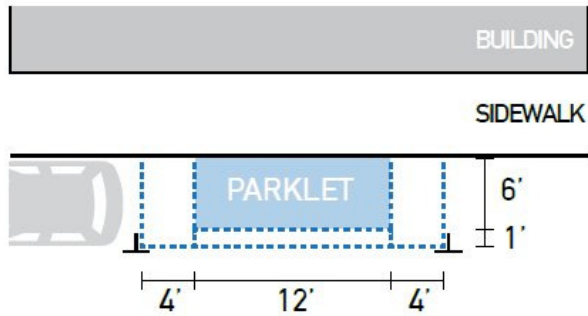
## PARKLET DESIGN GUIDELINES

These design guidelines ensure that all parklets are safe, accessible, attractive, and functional. To make your parklet a welcoming gathering space, it should feature high quality materials and built-in elements like benches or seats and landscaping. You should think about what people will do in your parklet and the kinds of activities you want to promote. Locally-sourced or reclaimed materials are strongly encouraged.

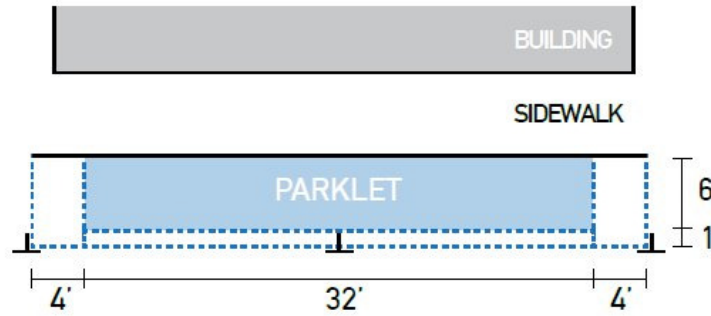
### Footprint

**LENGTH:** The minimum length for a parklet and its required safety features is 20 feet. With four foot buffers on each end (see below), this means the smallest parklet structure would be 12 feet long. Parklets that use more than two parking spaces will require additional review so that we can look closely at parking needs nearby, such as the number of loading zones, on-street, and off-street parking spaces and how full they tend to be. If you are considering putting a parklet in a loading zone or another specially designated space, we recommend you first look for a nearby place to move that zone and then notify other businesses on the block.

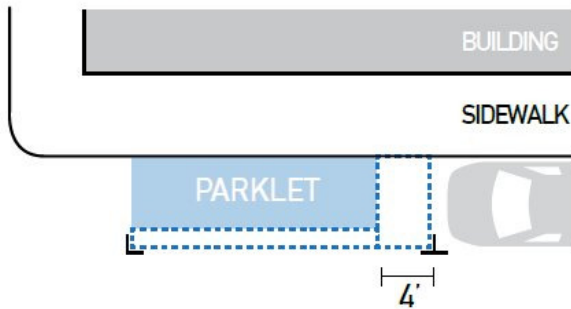
### MINIMUM DIMENSIONS



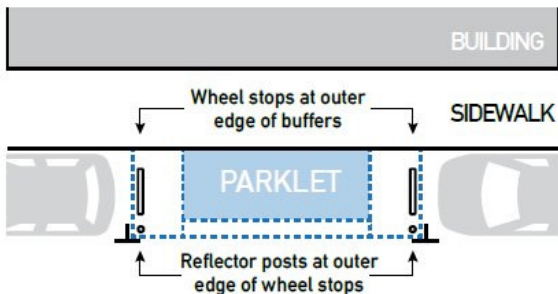
### DOUBLE SPACE DIMENSIONS



### CORNER BUFFER



### WHEEL STOP & REFLECTOR POSTS



**WIDTH:** The maximum parklet width is six feet, measured from the face of the curb.

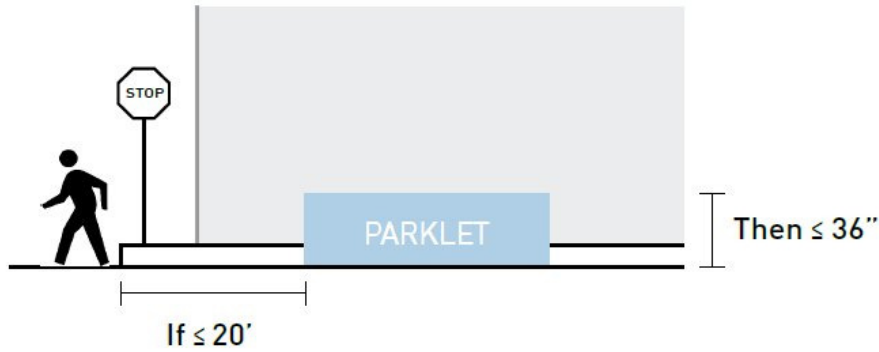
**BUFFER:** To ensure visibility and to protect your parklet from damage from parking maneuvers, we require a four foot buffer on both ends of the parklet. If your parklet is at a corner, the buffer is not required on the side closest to the corner. Wheel stops must be installed at the back of the buffers to prevent people from parking too close to your parklet. To enhance visibility, reflector posts are required at the outside corners of the buffers. These buffer areas

don't have to remain empty space, though. We encourage you to install a bike rack, large planter, or other features within the buffer zone as an added amenity. Please see the Building Your Parklet chapter for additional details.

### Vertical Elements

The parklet must have a continuous edge along the travel lane, such as railings, planters, or seat walls. This edge helps to increase visibility for road users and should be at least 30 inches tall, as measured from the street surface. If any portion of your parklet is located within 20 feet of a crosswalk, the height of that portion (including plantings) may not exceed 36 inches.

### MAXIMUM HEIGHT NEAR CORNERS



This ensures that sight lines for pedestrians remain clear at crosswalks. Please be aware that legal crosswalks at intersections are not always marked. Overhead weather protection is a great feature that can be included in your parklet design. Overhead features may not extend beyond the street edge of the parklet and must be at least 8 feet high if over the sidewalk.

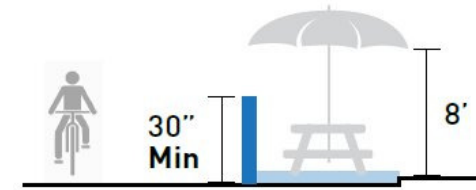
### Frame and Deck

The parklet frame should be a freestanding structural foundation that rests on the street surface. This frame cannot be permanently attached to the street, curb, or adjacent planting strip. You may, however, use small pin bolts to attach the parklet to the street. You

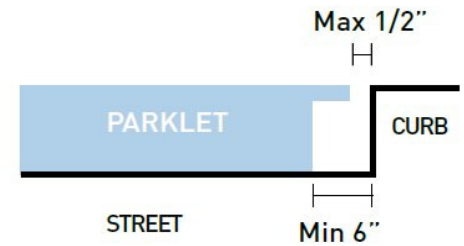
must leave a minimum twelve -inch gap between the curb and base of the frame to allow rainwater to run along the curb. Drainage studies may be required in certain areas, in order to ensure adequate drainage of public streets. Depending on site-specific conditions, we may require a wider gap. You may cover this drainage channel with screens at each end to prevent debris from building up under the parklet. You will also need to ensure easy access to the drainage channel (removable panels or grates), in the event the drainage channel becomes obstructed.

The entire parklet structure should be built to allow for easy removal of the parklet if necessary. Wood frame, steel

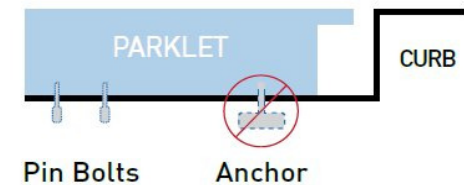
### MINIMUM HEIGHT



### GUTTER & DECK GAP



### ATTACHING TO STREET



frame, or pedestal support systems are recommended. The weight of the deck should be less than 200 pounds per square foot. The height of the deck surface should be flush with the adjacent sidewalk, and/or be designed to meet universally accessible guidelines. A maximum horizontal gap of ½ inch between the curb and the deck is allowed (exceptions can be made to address Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements). Lumber, wood tiles, or precast concrete pavers are good choices for the parklet platform surface.

### Materials

The parklet should be constructed of high-quality, durable, non-reflective, and aesthetically-pleasing materials. Steel, finished woods, salvaged building materials, and sustainably sourced materials are recommended. All walking surfaces should be non-slip and weather resilient to ensure safety and accessibility. Since parklets are intended to be temporary structures, it is also important to consider the ease of disassembly and potential for recycling or reuse of materials.

### Accessibility and ADA

We want everyone to be able to use and enjoy parklets, whether they are on foot, in a wheelchair, using a walker, or in a stroller. To achieve this goal, the parklet must be accessible as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The design should incorporate at least one ADA access point for each parking space used for the parklet. Seating must be accessible and meet ADA requirements for the turning movement (60" diameter turning circle) and the resting space of a wheelchair. The maximum vertical gap between the curb and the parklet decking is ¼ inch. Additional ADA treatments, such as a ramp or beveled edge, may be required if the vertical gap exceeds ¼ inch.

### Amenities

#### SEATING

All parklets must incorporate built-in seating, which can be integrated in a variety of creative ways. These seats can be a part of the parklet structure, planters, or creative features within the parklet. Comfortable places to sit are important to creating welcoming and



inviting public spaces. Additional movable seating is recommended as well. This seating can be removed and stored at the end of the day or locked with cables to the parklet structure. Parklet furnishings should be distinct from any furnishings used by the hosting business or organization. If the parklet host is a business with a sidewalk café, the tables and chairs must be a different style from the ones used in the café. It is important to remember that the parklet is a public amenity, and as such, should be easily distinguishable from nearby private property.





## LANDSCAPING

Your parklet must have some type of landscaping. Landscape plantings help soften the space and can serve as a pleasant buffer along the street-facing parklet edge. Landscape elements may be incorporated as planter boxes, hanging planters, green walls, or ADA accessible raised beds, for example. Drought-tolerant and native plants are good choices for ease of maintenance. Edible plants and plants with fragrance, texture, and seasonal interest are also recommended.

## LIGHTING

Lighting is allowed but may require a Utility Permit, depending on what you propose. Self-contained low-voltage systems, such as solar or battery powered lights, are a good choice. Decorative or seasonal lighting may be allowed in street trees near the parklet, but requires special approval. Flashing lights and cords that extend over the sidewalk are not allowed.

## BICYCLE PARKING

Whether integrated into the parklet structure or installed on the street next to the parklet, bike parking is encouraged. In fact, we can provide on-street bicycle racks at no charge. Please see the Building Your Parklet chapter for additional details.

## SIGNS

All parklets must feature signs indicating the space is public. These signs should be mounted to both ends of the parklet and should be visible from the adjacent sidewalk. Signs acknowledging sponsorship, logos, or designs that “brand” the parklet must comply with the City of Anniston Sign Ordinance.

## ARTWORK

Art can enhance the attractiveness of and create identity for your parklet. Some parklet hosts have integrated permanent artwork into the design of their parklets, while others have dedicated spaces in their parklets for rotating installations. The space for and programming of your art installations should be clearly indicated in your

concept drawings. Some art, depending on size, design, and placement, may require additional review.

### HEATING AND GAS POWER

Outdoor heaters and elements that use gas or propane fuel can help to make your parklet more comfortable throughout the year. Heating and gas-powered features are allowed in parklets but will require an additional Fire Department Permit.

### PLAY EQUIPMENT

The most successful parklets are those that are comfortable, accessible, and enjoyable for people all ages. We encourage you to incorporate play elements in your parklet to make it a fun place for children (and adults) to spend time. Play equipment can include sandboxes, games, and swing seating. These features can be creatively integrated into the parklet structure or can be movable.



### SURFACE PAINTING

Depending on the location, it may be possible to paint the street adjacent to your parklet. Street painting will be considered on a case-by-case basis and will require additional review.

### ACTIVATION AND PROGRAMMING

Activation and programming, or how the parklet is used, is an important part of the parklet's design and an opportunity to get creative. The parklet may be a simple space for relaxation or it may have more interactive features, such as art, music, play equipment, or outdoor games.



A parklet in Philadelphia, PA, designed by Shift Design

## **TECHNICAL DEVELOPMENT**

### **CONSTRUCTION DOCUMENTS**

The last step to getting your Public Space Permit is submitting a complete set of construction documents that are drawn to scale, showing the dimensions, materials, assembly details, and landscape plan for the parklet. We will review this last set of drawings in detail to make sure that your parklet will look and function as intended throughout its life in the public right-of way.

### **BUILDING PERMIT**

Since the construction and assembly work will occur in the right-of way, you'll need to obtain a Building Permit before installation begins. For this permit, you must submit a Building Permit Application form and a site plan showing the area in the right-of-way that you plan to use during construction, along with a Traffic Control Plan that indicates how you will ensure safe traffic movement around your construction area.

### **LIABILITY INSURANCE**

As with most types of Street Use Permits, you must carry \$1 million in commercial general liability insurance for your business or organization and add the City of Anniston as an "additional insured" to your policy. This is a minimal cost for businesses or organizations that already have liability insurance, although you must provide us with a certificate of liability insurance before we can issue your permit.



## **BUILDING YOUR PARKLET**

### **PERMIT ISSUANCE & FEES**

After the technical review of your construction documents is complete, we'll be ready to issue your Public Space permit and Building Permit. The last thing we'll need is payment of your permit fees.

### **INSTALLING YOUR PARKLET**

When we issue your final Building Permit, our staff will advise you on site-

specific considerations related to your permit:

- Prior to starting construction, you will be responsible for placing temporary No Parking Signs adjacent to the parking spaces you plan to use for the parklet. This is a two-step process that requires you to rent "No Parking" sign easels from a traffic control vendor and attach a self-verification form to the easels. The signs must be placed in the right-of-way 72 hours in advance of the day you start building.

- You'll also be responsible for ensuring that all nearby trees in planting strips and tree pits are protected during parklet construction. The tree root zone should not be used to stage equipment or stockpile materials. Tree protection fencing should be used to mark a minimum four-foot tree protection root zone around the trunk.

### **OFF-SITE CONSTRUCTION**

We recommend that you spend as little time building in the right-of-way as possible by starting your parklet construction off site. Contractors often find that they can prepare materials and build the parklet frame on private property before delivering it to the parklet site.

### **PARKLET SAFETY ELEMENTS**

During construction, you must install wheel stops and reflective delineator posts at the outside edges of your parklet buffer. Wheel stops must be placed on each end of the parklet that borders a parking space. The wheel stops must be mounted four feet back from the edge of the parklet and one foot out from the curb, although this

distance may be increased to accommodate bike racks or other amenities. The delineator posts must be placed six inches out from the corners of the wheel stops.

You must purchase wheel stops that are four feet long, bolt-mounted, and made of recycled rubber. Delineator posts must be 36-inch tall, cylindrical, white safe-hit posts and must include reflective striping. These posts should use a surface mount pin-lock base and be attached to the street with either a butyl adhesive pad or epoxy kit.

### **PARKLET SIGNS**

The City of Anniston will provide you with two “Public Parklet” signs to install on both ends of your parklet. These required signs should be mounted to the parklet in places that are highly visible to passing pedestrians.

### **ON-STREET BICYCLE PARKING**

Parklets and bikes go great together! If you would like bike parking next to your parklet—and if your parklet is on a street where this is possible. The City will need to approve all bike racks. You will be required to leave at least three

feet of clear space on either end of the rack to give people biking plenty of space to use the rack.

### **MAINTENANCE**

The parklet host is responsible for all maintenance duties and costs to keep the parklet in good condition, including daily cleaning and maintenance, and clearing the drainage channel at the curb as often as required. Proper maintenance is a condition of the parklet permit, and you will need to sign a maintenance agreement before the permit is issued. Prior to submitting an application, please be sure that you will have sufficient resources and staff available to keep your parklet clean and in a state of good repair.



## **MANAGING YOUR PARKLET**

### **PERMIT RENEWAL**

The Public Space Permit must be renewed once a year. The annual renewal fee is \$200, and we'll send you a renewal notice and invoice prior to the anniversary date of your permit. An inspector will visit your parklet around the time of permit renewal and will work with you to ensure that any maintenance, safety, or accessibility issues get resolved. Also, remember to make sure your liability insurance policy is up to date before renewing your permit.

### **PARKLET EVALUATION**

The City of Anniston is very interested in the effectiveness of parklets and we will want to know how your parklet is doing. We will make regular visit to the parklet to count the number of people in the parklet and record how it's being used. We will also ask you to provide quarterly sales data from before and after the parklet installation so that we can measure the economic impact of parklets in Downtown Anniston.

### **CHANGE OF OWNERSHIP**

If your business changes ownership or your community group dissolves, you may choose to either transfer the parklet permit a new host or remove the parklet. Please contact the Department of Planning and Development Services if you would like to transfer your permit.

### **MAKING CHANGES TO YOUR PARKLET**

As a parklet host, you're welcome to make minor changes to your parklet after it's installed. This might include changing the type of movable furniture in the parklet or putting in new plants. However, anything that changes the materials, function, footprint, and/or significantly alters the appearance of the parklet must be reviewed by the city of Anniston to ensure compliance with your permit. Major modifications, such as extending a parklet's decking, may require a new permit.

### **PARKLET REMOVAL**

A parklet must be constructed and installed in a way that allows you to easily remove it when needed. In rare circumstances, we may require that you temporarily or permanently remove your parklet. You must be able to do so within 30 days of our notice. Faster removal may be required for emergency work. As the parklet host, you are responsible for all costs and labor associated with the disassembly and removal of your parklet.

